

# Nevada Government Communications Conference

## 12/03/2002

### SUMMARY

- ✚ Introductions by Terry Savage, Nevada's State CIO, and Frank Sircusa, Chief of Nevada's Division of Emergency Management, stressed a need for personal interoperability and cooperation first. Being able to talk to each other is to be achieved before solutions are decided upon.
- ✚ Keynote speaker, Steve Proctor, Executive Director of UCAN, believes that organizing and planning is the most important "first step" in the process. He also stated that all technologies should be considered a critical part of the system because if one fails the whole system fails, i.e., WAN, LAN, mainframe, radios, voice, etc.
  - ❖ Utah's Challenges...
    - No funds for the system
    - No organized approach to fix the problem
    - Had to change the thought process of political entities
    - Radio operators and IT professionals needed to have a working relationship
    - No one wanted to listen to the findings from the study
    - Control needed to become partnering and sharing
    - Partnering for big ticket items
    - Corrections needed to be involved from the beginning
  - ❖ Utah's Lessons Learned...
    - Politics drive the technology, need political backing and cooperation
    - The technology already exists and isn't hard
    - Everyone has to give up something in order to move forward
    - You need partnering and negotiation skills
    - Must have an accountant, an attorney (3-5% of the project), and a banker
    - Should have a 15% contingency fund for unexpected expenses
    - Public Safety providers do not like service fees
    - Requires systems engineers, radio engineers, software engineers, and radio technicians
    - Training is a necessity and you can't train enough
    - System management is critical
    - Actual system life expectancy is 5-7 years not the advertised 10 years
    - Needs dedicated funding
    - Never give up and keep focused
- ✚ Neil Johnson gave an overview of FEMA and its relationship to the Homeland Security initiatives/structure. Nevada's Secretary of State will be our link into Homeland Security

with funding being approved by FEMA. Nevada had the best First Responder grant application and it is on the way to being funded.

#### Group Panel discussion highlights...

- Should have Data Operations, Technology, Inventory and Finance committees
- Need to hold to a rigid schedule for meetings so that things get accomplished
- Involve people from every level of the political structure
- Include wireless into the connectivity and sharing piece
- Common platforms and working together will be key
- Look at tax bases for funds, i.e., special tax on cell phones, sales taxes, property taxes for sheriff systems, etc.
- Committee should remain a workable size (11-13). Utah has 15 members on the board with each member heading a sub-committee to get the work done.
- Utah invites its 93 partnering agencies to every board meeting
- Firemen seem to have beat the interop problem and it was suggested that ICS be used as a baseline
- Administration and processes must be addressed
- Nevada's DEM is the center for a disaster coordinated response
- City of Las Vegas is integrating their data and voice systems
- Build as much system automation as possible
- Consider the reduction of time to communicate between the different entities during an emergency situation
- To get critical information disseminated we could use HAN (Health Alert Network), e-mail, and fax (the federal system doesn't seem to work well). The Emergency Alert System and the media should be used and will be part of the system (be aware of issues around broadcast turfs)
- Leadership towards goals and continuity
- Need structure and procedures
- Look at capacity and reliability
- Train on the system and educate the public
- Adopt and support a standard for the technology
- Break down turf lines
- Inventory agencies, equipment and life cycles
- Develop an operational impact statement
- Video conferencing between the state and local EOC
- Develop a strategic plan to cover all aspects of communication
- Identify individuals that have specific skills which can be used during an event and have on-going training

#### Critical Needs highlights...

- Public Safety voice interoperability between all agencies
- Reliability, Recovery, Replication, and Saving the Data
- Coverage
- Data Capability
- Mobil / Wireless
- Affordability of maintenance and support
- Utilize the Amateur Radio groups

- Organization of roles and responsibilities
- Top down mandate
- Leadership at committee and agency levels
- Established mission and goals with an on-going commitment
- Clearly defined procedures on information handling / dissemination
- Adequate training
- Capacity
- Pervasive – must handle every type of user
- Funding for ongoing operations as well as up front costs
- Public involvement and training
- Methods established to reach all responders with the same information
- Knock down turf lines
- Develop standards for the technology
- More staff to support the locals
- Better mutual aid systems (through NRS)
- Better overall distribution of critical information
- Better video conferencing
- Briefcase EOC for mobility / flexibility

#### Wrap up highlights...

- Need a comprehensive infrastructure, i.e., voice, data management, satellite / video conferencing. First responders need all three.
- The system needs to be configured for interoperability by using ICS as a base
- Need planning dollars for EOC
- Both interstate and intrastate operations need to be addressed
- Benchmark other communities
- Have a tiered approach to investment and roll-out
- A statewide system with standards gives us the opportunity to seamlessly move to new technologies in the future
- Create joint power authorities to discuss requirements for the future
- Infrastructure needs to be the high level focus so that we can get there
- Utilize current studies and information that we already have
- Review current vendor services for those who can provide the support
- Get cities involved in laying the fiber and lease it to others to re-coup the funds
- Consolidate services between the counties so that we can all benefit
- Need redundancy so that we can fail over
- Centralize control and leadership
- The strategic plan along with the standards that come out of it will be a critical piece
- Pull grant monies together
- Formulate a plan, divide it into tasks, and assign them to sub-committees
- Set a timeline so that goals get achieved
- Involve Amateur Radio
- Mandate and funding from above to drive progress
- Need a focal point and database for the collection of information and inventories
- All current (and funded) systems along with an inventory should be reported and placed on the Nevada map to avoid duplication
- Purpose of the second meeting should be to establish mission and goals